



THE NEW ZEALAND GAZETTE EXTRAORDINARY

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THE Third Session of the Thirty-fifth Parliament of New Zealand was this day opened by the Governor-General, when His Excellency was pleased to make the following statement of the causes of the calling of this session of Parliament together:

HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

During the latter part of this year and the early months of next year New Zealanders will celebrate the Bicentenary of Captain Cook's first voyage to New Zealand. The announcement that Her Majesty the Queen and His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh will be joining with us in these celebrations has given us a great deal of pleasure and we look forward to their visit with eager anticipation.

Since I last addressed you I have been able to see much of New Zealand, renewing past memories of a beautiful country, appreciating the strength and vitality of a fast developing nation, and meeting everywhere kindness and hospitality from my fellow New Zealanders.

In the field of international affairs it is the central purpose of my Government to develop a close co-operation with other countries in the Asian and Pacific regions. During the past year my Prime Minister made most useful visits to a number of Asian countries. In return my Government was pleased to welcome to New Zealand a number of distinguished visitors including the President of the Republic of Korea, the Prime Minister of India, and the Foreign Minister of Indonesia.

Exchanges of this nature are among the varied means by which my Government is widening its consultations with Asian Governments, strengthening existing partnerships and seeking new and better relations with our neighbours.

In the view of my Government, South-East Asia remains the area in which New Zealand can most effectively contribute to efforts to maintain peace and security through collective action. Britain's decision to withdraw its military forces from Malaysia and Singapore by the end of 1971 directly affects these collective arrangements and is creating an entirely new situation for New Zealand. Despite the changed circumstances my Government continues to believe firmly that New Zealand has a national interest in the security of South-East Asia and a genuine national role to play there.

My Government has accordingly announced its decision to maintain naval, army, and air forces at present strengths in Malaysia and Singapore after 1971. The arrangements by which our presence in these countries will in future be based are being discussed with the Governments of Australia, Britain, Malaysia and Singapore.

New Zealand will be represented at senior Ministerial level at a Five-Power Meeting to be held next month to discuss further the implications of the British withdrawal.

Despite the limitation of bombing and the opening of talks designed to bring about a peaceful settlement in Vietnam, communist aggression and subversion have been maintained in the South, fighting has been heavy and the need for allied help has continued. My Government has therefore maintained both its military and civilian assistance to the Republic of Vietnam. It remains convinced, however, that a lasting settlement of the conflict can come only through negotiations undertaken in good faith. It places great importance on the success of the Paris talks and in consultation with its allies will continue to seek a settlement which will bring an end to aggression from the North, maintain freedom of choice in the South and provide for forms of international supervision and guarantee.

My Government has always believed that stability in South-East Asia and elsewhere depends not only on the maintenance of security but also on the development of social and economic conditions offering health and opportunity for the individual. It continues therefore to place special importance on several forms of international assistance under the Colombo Plan and the Special Commonwealth African Assistance Plan. It will continue to increase its valuable bilateral aid to Asian countries and Commonwealth countries in Africa. It will also give practical support to multilateral aid programmes through its financial contribution to United Nations agencies. In addition it will continue to assist and encourage the excellent work done in the field of aid by private organisations in New Zealand.

My Government has been pleased to play a part in a revival of confidence and co-operation within the Commonwealth. The recent Conference of Commonwealth Prime Ministers, which my Prime Minister attended, demonstrated that the Commonwealth, now an association of 28 independent nations, is well equipped to assist international understanding and human betterment. Much of New Zealand's most important international activity is performed within a Commonwealth setting and in the year ahead my Government is determined to play a full part in the varied forms of Commonwealth endeavour.

New Zealand's international ties are varied and its international problems complex but above all it is a country of the South Pacific and must always have special regard for conditions and developments in its own region. The growing importance of New Zealand's relations with the countries of the South Pacific has been underlined by visits here earlier this year by the Prime Minister of Western Samoa, the Chief Minister of Fiji, the President of the Republic of Nauru and the Premier of the Cook Islands.

My Government looks forward to a continuing close relationship with the Government and people of the Cook Islands. In addition to the provision of an airport and the fostering of tourism and commercial activity in the Cook Islands, my Government will assist the Cook Islands with the building of a new general hospital.

A full member system of Government has been introduced in Niue and my Government will continue to give aid and advice in developing the Territory in accordance with the wishes of its people. A Niue Amendment Bill will be placed before you for your consideration.

During the Session you will be asked to enact legislation to give effect to minor administrative changes concerning the advancement of the people of the Tokelau Islands.

In September my wife and I will have the pleasure of visiting our fellow New Zealanders in Niue and the Tokelau Islands, as well as visiting Western Samoa, Tonga, and Fiji and we look forward to this event.

Honourable Members—During 1968 considerable progress has been made in strengthening New Zealand's balance of payments. Prices for some of our major exports have improved but others, notably those for cheese, have fallen and dairy prices generally are still depressed. Production for export has continued to increase and there has been a significant increase in exports of manufactured goods. Imports increased but were well within current earnings and as a result there was a current account surplus. This enabled my Government to repay a considerable volume of short-term external debt while maintaining the official reserves at a satisfactory level.

My Government's policies are designed to ensure that the economy will continue to derive the maximum benefit from devaluation. To this end my Ministers introduced additional measures last year to curb the excessive importing of various goods and to reduce the rate of increase in domestic expenditure. The combined objectives of my Ministers are to ensure that the rate of spending does not exceed the resources available and to keep the country's external transactions in balance.

The National Development Conference and the associated Conferences on Forestry and Tourism have now completed their work. The second and final plenary session of the National Development Conference which was held in these buildings last week, adopted national growth targets and challenging export goals for the next decade. The Conference endorsed a wide range of recommendations designed to promote economic growth and social development.

The development programme produced by the Conference represents a consensus among many diverse and competing interest groups in the community, which have endeavoured to put the national interest above sectional advantage.

My Government is fully aware of the responsibility which rests on it to act quickly and decisively to ensure that the momentum for progressive change is maintained. It has already approved some of the Conference recommendations. Other recommendations which call for Government action will be dealt with expeditiously. There are many recommendations of the Conference which involve other sectors of the economy which will be subject to the oversight of the National Development Council which my Government will establish on the recommendation of the Conference.

The National Development Conference has rightly given attention to the expansion of the export earning capacity of sectors of the economy which until recently have made only a limited contribution to the country's reserves of overseas funds. It is significant that despite the very substantial growth in exports envisaged in these sectors over the target period, it is estimated that the agricultural sector will still be responsible for over 70 percent of the country's export earnings in 10 years' time.

My Government will continue to assist primary producers by helping them to make the best use of their land and by ensuring that the legislation which affects this vital area of the economy is relevant to their needs.

You have been asked to consider in recent years a number of measures with this objective and this Session you will have before you revisions and consolidations of the Apiaries Act and the Veterinary Surgeons Act.

Amendments to the Orchard and Garden Diseases Act, the Animals Act, and the Animals Remedies Act are also under consideration.

My Ministers have been vigilant in seeking to expand marketing opportunities for agricultural products and to combat the effects of agricultural protection where these have affected marketing prospects.

Throughout 1968 my Ministers have sought within the framework of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade to bring the principal countries engaged in trade in dairy products together, with a view to negotiating an interim agreement limiting the harmful dumping at uneconomic prices which has characterised this trade in recent years. Like all international commodity negotiations this is a most difficult and complex task but my Ministers are determined to use every avenue open to this country to achieve more orderly international marketing of dairy products and to secure their greater use as food aid.

My Government takes great satisfaction from the remarkable increase in exports to Australia which has taken place within the framework of the New Zealand - Australia Free Trade Agreement. It welcomed the opportunity of the discussions held in Wellington in February with the Australian Minister of Trade and Industry, to review the progress made and to make decisions to promote further the free flow of this trade.

A vital element in the efficiency of New Zealand's export trade is an efficient and economic shipping service. The technological advances associated with containerisation promise significant efficiencies and my Ministers expect shortly to be in a position to make important decisions on the basis of recommendations made to them by the Transport Commission.

Honourable Members—During this Session further legislation will be introduced in pursuance of my Government's programme of systematic law reform. A close study is being made of the question of the age of majority and such related matters as the voting age and the legal drinking age. In the light of this study my advisers will consider whether or not amending legislation should be introduced this Session.

You will be asked to consider a Bill amending the law governing the contracts of minors.

A Legal Aid Bill introducing a system of legal aid in civil cases is proposed and you will also be asked to consider Bills revising the statutory law governing executors and administrators and amending the Summary Proceedings Act and the Criminal Injuries Act.

A Bill will be submitted constituting the Hotel Association of New Zealand and prescribing its powers and responsibilities.

You will be asked to consider an amendment to the Poisons Act to strengthen the provisions of the existing law.

A Bill to revise the Physiotherapy Act will also be submitted.

You will be asked to validate the recently announced increases in Social Security benefits and war pensions.

My Government has recently completed negotiations with the Government of the United Kingdom on a revised agreement covering reciprocity of Social Security benefits under prescribed conditions. The necessary legislation will be placed before you.

The legislation necessary to give effect to the recently announced alterations in the Health Benefits Scheme will be submitted for your consideration. Another matter which you will be asked to consider is a consolidation and revision of the Child Welfare Act.

Much interest has been shown in the radical recommendations of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Compensation for Personal Injury in New Zealand. My Government believes that because the changes recommended by the Royal Commission are fundamental and would, if implemented, affect many people, the widest possible appreciation of the issues involved is necessary. For this reason my advisers are preparing a White Paper which will set out the issues involved and assist in permitting the fullest discussion of the proposals.

My Government will continue to encourage home ownership through the provision of finance on favourable terms from the State Advances Corporation. The building of State rental flats and houses will be continued at its present rate and with re-lettings it is expected that some 6,000 families will be provided with rented homes this year.

It is intended to amend the Housing Improvement Act implementing certain recommendations of the Study Group on Urban Renewal.

You will be asked to consider an improvement to the Town and Country Planning Act establishing on a temporary basis a third Town and Country Planning Appeal Board to overcome the backlog of appeals awaiting hearing.

A Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Amendment Bill will be introduced to extend the powers of the Catchment Commissions to coincide more closely with those of the Catchment Boards.

Honourable Members—My Government will continue to deal energetically with those matters which impede the progress of the Maori people. In particular, a high priority will be given to education and to the training of young Maoris for skilled occupations.

The progress in the development of Maori land, including capital advances to incorporations, will be maintained and full attention will be given to the difficulties confronting Maori people moving into the cities.

Following the transfer of Maori schools to Education Board control at the beginning of this year, my Government intends to reconstitute the National Advisory Committee on Maori Education to make it more directly representative of Maori educational interests.

Last year my Government announced proposals to improve the staffing of secondary and primary schools. New schemes have been introduced to supplement the supply of teachers coming from the training colleges. Older people are being encouraged to take up, or resume, careers in teaching and there has been a most promising response to the campaign launched at the beginning of this year to recruit teachers in the United Kingdom.

The change to 3-year training in the primary teachers training colleges will be completed as planned by the end of 1971 and it will then be possible to speed up the progress that is being made in the reduction in size of primary classes.

My Government intends to continue the extension of facilities for higher technical education, taking into account the recommendations of the National Development Conference.

My Government is concerned to encourage the practice and appreciation of the arts through the work of the Queen Elizabeth the Second Arts Council and it has recently increased its financial assistance to the Council.

Earlier this year my Government received a report on the General Wage Order system from a Committee comprising representatives of the main parties involved. The recommendations of this Committee, together with representations since received, are being carefully studied. It is the intention of my Government to introduce amending legislation this Session.

During the recent economic recession the demand for labour in New Zealand fell and my Government took steps to provide additional employment for those unable to obtain work. The demand has risen again and there are now more vacancies than men available to fill them. However, my advisers are well aware that for some people and in some parts of the country, employment is difficult to obtain. In this connection the Auckland Advisory Committee on Training and Employment is already working on some of the problems which lead to insecurity of employment.

Amendments to the Factories Act are proposed to standardise fire escape provisions, to deal with excessive noise in factories and to increase the flexibility of hours of work in certain circumstances. It is also proposed to amend the provisions of the Machinery Act relating to training and supervision in respect of potentially dangerous machines. A minor amendment to the Apprentices Act is also proposed.

Honourable Members—The recent discovery of oil off the Taranaki coast is indicative of the growing interest being shown in the exploitation of New Zealand's mineral wealth. My Government believes it is in the public interest to develop all mineral resources fully. It will continue to provide incentives to encourage exploration and mining by both New Zealand and overseas companies with appropriate safeguards to ensure that damage to the nation's heritage of National Parks and Scenic Reserves is minimised.

A review and consolidation of the mining legislation is proposed and associated amendments to the Water and Soil Conservation Act and the Construction Act will also be put before you.

The industrial development policy of my Government will continue to stress the importance of export earnings or import savings and the greater use of national resources of capital, labour and materials to achieve a higher New Zealand content in industrial production. Overseas investment which will help to promote these objectives will also be encouraged.

The New Zealand Steel Industry commenced the production of galvanised steel sheet in November. It is now commissioning its steel-making furnaces and will produce steel from New Zealand iron sands later this year. The new aluminium smelter at Bluff is in the course of construction. Both these vast new industries will be using the natural resources of New Zealand for the benefit of New Zealanders. They demonstrate the growing maturity of the nation's industrial development.

To facilitate the development of industry my Ministers intend to continue the programmed exemption of plant, equipment and materials from import licensing control.

You will be asked to continue your consideration of two measures introduced last year to protect the consumer—the Consumer Protection Bill and the Trading Coupons Amendment Bill.

Two further Bills to protect consumer interests will be introduced this Session, a Hire Purchase Agreements Amendment Bill and a Chattels Transfer Amendment Bill. Both measures arise from the adoption by my Government of certain recommendations of the Tariff and Development Board on Instalment Credit Trading.

Minor amendments are also proposed to the Dogs Registration Act, the Public Bodies Leases Act and the Rating Act.

Other measures which will be submitted to you include a Bill to enable a Building Research Association to be established, amendments to the Cinematograph Films Act, the Electricity Act and the Electricity Distribution Commission Act. There will be amendments to the Fisheries Act and the Post Office Act and you will also have before you a New Zealand Security Intelligence Service Bill.

My Government anticipates that during this Session you will complete the consideration of measures which have been studied by Select Committees during the Recess. These include the Status of Children Bill, the Mental Health Bill and the Food and Drug Bill.

I commend all these matters to your careful consideration and I pray that Divine guidance will attend your deliberations.